

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 PEKING 00278 090802Z  
ACTION EA-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ONY-00 /007 W  
-----090810Z 106452 /17

R 090605Z FEB 77  
FM USLO PEKING  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7222  
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK  
AMCONSUL HONG KONG  
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA  
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR  
AMEMBASSY MANILA  
AMEMBASSY RANGOON  
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE  
AMEMBASSY TOKYO  
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 0278

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

LIMDIS

DEPT FOR EA ONLY

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR, US, XB  
SUBJ: U.S. POLICY ON SOUTHEAST ASIA IN POST-VIETNAM PERIOD

REF: STATE 25347

1. WE OFFER SOME VERY GENERAL POINTS ABOUT THE CHINA  
ANGLE IN U.S. POLICY ON SOUTHEAST ASIA, POST-VIETNAM.  
THESE BOIL DOWN TO: CHINA POLICY CONSIDERATIONS SHOULD  
NOT DOMINATE OUR THINKING ABOUT SOUTHEAST ASIA, BUT WE  
SHOULD MAKE SURE THE CHINESE HAVE A CURRENT UNDERSTANDING  
OF U.S. ACTIONS THAT BEAR ON THEIR SECURITY INTERESTS.  
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2. THOUGH IT STILL OCCUPIES A BIG PLACE IN THE  
PSYCHOLOGY OF SOUTHEAST ASIA, CHINA HAS VERY LIMITED  
MEANS, BEYOND DIPLOMATIC PERSUASION, OF INFLUENCING  
EVENTS THERE (SAVE PERHAPS IN CAMBODIA). THIS  
SITUATION WILL LIKELY CONTINUE FOR A LONG TIME AS  
CHINA WRESTLES WITH DOMESTIC PROBLEMS.

3. AMONG MAJOR POWERS IT IS WITH JAPAN, REATHER THAN CHINA, THAT WE HAVE THE CLOSEST IDENTITY OF INTERESTS IN AND REGARDING SOUTHEAST ASIA. THERE IS NO U.S. POLICY COURSE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA THAT WE WOULD URGE FOR THE PRIMARY REASON THAT IT WOULD STRENGTHEN OUR RELATIONS WITH CHINA. NOR CAN WE THINK OF ANY PROBABLY U.S. POLICY COURSE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA THAT WE WOULD ARGUE AGAINST PRIMARILY BECAUSE THE CHINESE WOULDN'T LIKE IT.

4. THERE IS, TO BE SURE, A BOTTOM LINE WHERE PEKING IS CONCERNED: THAT OUR ACTIONS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA NOT CALL INTO QUESTION OUR OPPOSITION, STATED IN THE SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE, TO "EFFORTS BY ANY OTHER COUNTRY OR GROUP OF COUNTRIEES" TO ESTABLISH HEGEMONY IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION. THIS BEARS ON HOW WE EVENTUALLY APPROACH ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO VIETNAM--WE SHOULD NOT APPEAR TO BE TRYING TO BUILD UP A REGIONAL RIVAL TO CHINA.

5. DESPITE ITS STAND IN THE SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE AGAINST BOTH "HEGEMONY" AND "SPHERES OF INFLUENCE," CHINA PROBABLY STILL LOOKS ON SOUTHEAST ASIA, AND ESPECIALLY THE LAND AREAS CONTIGUOUS TO CHINA, AS A REGION WHERE ITS OWN INFLUENCE SHOULD BE PREDOMINANT. WE CAN HARDLY DOUBT THAT CHINA'S ACTIVITY AND INFLUENCE IN THE REGION WILL INCREASE WITH ITS POWER. IF IN THE MEANTIME ECONOMIC PROGRESS AND NATIONAL CONSOLIDATION HAVE BEEN CONTINUING

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APACE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, THERE WILL BE THAT MUCH MORE INDUEMENT FOR A FUTURE, MORE POWERFUL CHINA TO ACT RESPONSIBLY. NO TIME SOON, HOWEVER, AND CERTAINLY NOT WHILE THE IDEOLOGICAL RIVALRY WITH MOSCOW PERSISTS, WOULD WE EXPECT PEKING TO GIVE UP TOTALLY ITS SUPPORT OF INSURGENT GROUPS.

6. THE CHINESE SEE THE U.S. ANTI-SOVIET ROLES IN RELATION TO WESTERN EUROPE, THE MIDDLE EAST AND JAPAN AS THE MOST IMPORTANT FOR CHINA'S OWN SECURITY. THEIR CONCERNS OVER SOVIET ENCIRCLEMENT ALSO EXTEND TO SOUTHEAST ASIA, HOWEVER, AND PEKING WILL NOT OBJECT TO CONTINUED U.S. MILITARY AID AND ARMS SALES TO SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES THAT THE CHINESE CAN SEE AS ESSENTIALLY FRUSTRATING SOVIET AIMS. GRADUAL REDUCTION OF OUR MILITARY PRESENCE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA WILL BOTHER THE CHINESE LEAST IF IT IS PLAUSIBLY PRESENTED AS SERVING TO ENHANCE OUR STRENGTH IN THE PRIMARY AREAS OF U.S.-SOVIET

CONTENTION.

7. WE DO NOT FOR THE TIME BEING HAVE SPECIFIC  
RECOMMENDATIONS ON U.S. POLICY TOWARD INDIVIDUAL  
COUNTRIES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. BUT WE STRESS THE  
IMPORTANCE OF MAKING SURE THE CHINESE HAVE A  
CURRENT UNDERSTANDING OF OUR AIMS AND GENERAL  
PROGRAMS AS THESE BEAR ON CHINESE SECURITY CONCERNS.  
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## Message Attributes

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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009